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March 2008 | NEWS FROM KOLPING INTERNATIONAL

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## **Togo**

### **Kolping Togo received by Kolping International as the 42<sup>nd</sup> National Kolping Society**

During a special ceremony, held in Lomé on February 9, 2008, Msgr. Axel Werner received Kolping Togo as the 42<sup>nd</sup> National Kolping Society into the International Kolping Society. The founding celebrations began with a Pontifical Mass at the parish Saint Augustin Amoutivé with the Past Archbishop Philippe Faloko Kpdzro, who is himself a great supporter of Kolping Togo and had initiated a new start of the Kolping Society in Togo after a difficult beginning. Today Kolping Togo has 41 Kolping Families with about 700 members. 350 members, primarily from the region of Lomé, took part in the founding celebrations. During the official part of the founding event, the national constitution was ratified and on its basis the National Executive Board was elected. The Pontifical Mass was broadcast live on the local radio, and during the evening news, there was a 10-minute report on the objectives and working methods of the Kolping Society, the activities of the Association in Togo, and about the founding celebration. The project activities of the Kolping Society are predominantly in the area of rural development, but also in the area of water supply and in the development of a catering service with the goal of creating jobs.

## **Germany**

### **KOLPING INTERNATIONAL plans Rome Pilgrimage in 2011**

At its meeting on February 13, 2008, the International Executive Board decided to have a Rome Pilgrimage from October 25 – 29, 2011. The reason for this planned pilgrimage is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fr. Kolping's beatification. As was done at the 2001 pilgrimage on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, KOLPING INTERNATIONAL will again offer a variety of programs, such as a welcoming event, liturgical services, a Papal audience, and processions through Rome with the multitude of Kolping flags. Travel arrangements and the accommodation in Rome are to be organized by the different groups from Kolping Families, Diocesan or National Kolping Societies themselves. Further details on the pilgrimage will be available by the end of 2009.

## **Cologne**

### **New campaign on the topic of Youth and the work world**

With the Federal Kolping Youth Assembly, held in Düsseldorf on February 16, 2008, a country-wide campaign "Youth and the work world" began, which focuses on the topic of occupational direction. Extensive material on this issue is available on the Internet as to how the local Kolping youths in the Kolping Families or the Kolping Families as such can find new ways to assist young people with their choice of occupation and with their entrance into the world of work. The suggestions range from assistance with putting together application documents and training in job interviews to liturgical services on this topic specifically for young people.

**Germany****Kolping takes on research project on the topic: "Youth accommodation"**

Adolph Kolping is seen as the father of youth accommodation and the founder of the first hostels for young journeymen. In view of these historic accomplishments of the Organization it is only logical that the Association of Kolping Houses has taken on the leading role for a project for research and practice-based developments with the title "to live, to learn, to make use of opportunities." This research project is to examine what demands presently exist in the area of youth accommodation and whether or not the ever-increasing mobility of young people will make additional accommodation options necessary. The four-year research project is to result not only in the implementation of new ideas in the existing youth accommodation facilities but also in the development of new concepts in this area and in the passing on of information to politicians for their deliberations and support measures in the area of youth accommodation. To accompany this project, an advisory board was set up on January 23, with personalities from the Church, the political arena, business, and the sciences, and they have all declared their support to secure the future of youth accommodation.

**Strasbourg****President of the Parliamentarian Assembly honours Kolping**

In a meeting with Mr. Anton Salesny, the representative of the Kolping Society, the newly-elected president of the parliamentarian assembly of the Council of Europe, Prof. Dr. Luis Maria de Puig Olive, honoured the long-standing commitment of the Kolping Society in support of the work done by the Council of Europe. In a special way he commended the fact that over that past 20 years, Kolping Europe has regularly issued declarations and always adopted a clear position on specific current work done by the Council of Europe. These declarations of the Kolping Society prove that, as an active part of civil society, it stands first and foremost for the promotion of human rights and the protection of human dignity, as well as for the strengthening of democracy in the countries of Europe.

**Strasbourg****Kolping Europe presents expectations with respect to family-political initiatives of the European Union**

On February 20, 2008, Kolping Europe's Executive Board met with those members of the European Parliament who belong to the Kolping Society. The number of Kolping members in the European Parliament has meanwhile grown to eight, beginning with the president of the European Parliament, Prof. Hans Gert Pöttering. In the course of this meeting, the president of Kolping Europe, Mrs. Barbara Breher, presented the members of Parliament with a resolution of the Executive Board, in which the Kolping Society formulates its expectations with regard to the family-political initiatives also on the part of the European Union. Kolping Europe specifically emphasizes the high priority of the family for the development and social cohesion of any society and points out that, according to a survey, 98% of Europeans consider the family to be very important. The Kolping Society specifically calls for a co-financing of day-care centres and after-school facilities with money from the European structural funds and a lowering of the value-added tax on products which serve the needs of children.

Politicians suggested that the Kolping Society should prepare a declaration on the up-coming election of the European Parliament in 2009, in order to motivate as many people as possible to take on their democratic responsibility by casting their vote during the election.

**Luxembourg****Erna Hennicot-Schoepges – new Kolping member in the European Parliament**

At the beginning 2008, Mrs. Hennicot-Schoepges became a member of Kolping Luxembourg and thereby raises the number of Kolping members in the European Parliament to eight. Mrs. Hennicot-Schoepges has had connections to Kolping Luxembourg for many years, because from 1988 to 1995 she was the mayor of the city of Walferdangen, where the Kolping Society has its

headquarters. From 1995 to 1999 she was the minister for general and occupational education, and from 1999 – 2004 the minister for the university and college system, research and culture, and for the public building system. Today she is part of the European Parliament and member of the European People Party's faction. Through Mrs. Hennicot-Schoepges's membership in the Kolping Society, the number of Kolping members in the European Parliament has risen to eight, four of them from Germany, two from Slovenia, one from South Tyrol, Italy, and one from Luxembourg.

## **Romania**

### **First graduates from training courses in tourism receive diplomas**

At the end of 2007, the first participants graduated from a practice-oriented occupational training course in tourism at the Kolping Hotel in Brasov. After six months of training, 16 waiters and 22 cooks received their diplomas and can now start to work as qualified staff in the hotels of the region. The growing significance of tourism in Romania also raises the demand for qualified personnel; so it is no surprise that the new training period for 28 cooks as well as 28 waiters, which started in January 2008, is completely booked up. Kolping Romania is also coming to terms with the growing significance of occupational training within the Organization through the opening of its own Internet browser on occupational training. This commitment of Kolping Romania is also a contribution to the implementation of the focal topic of Kolping International: "Sowing seeds of hope in the world of work."

## **Bolivia**

### **Kolping Foundation Bolivia presents performance records for 2007**

The year 2007 was once again extremely successful for the Kolping Foundation of Bolivia. In almost all areas of responsibility there was growth in the sought-after services. The Kolping Foundation Bolivia runs three medical centres in the area of Santa Cruz, one occupational training institute, a central laboratory and an optician's workshop, as well as the Kolping Houses in Sucre and Santa Cruz. In 2007, the two Kolping Houses looked after a total of 4870 guests; the optician's workshop produced 30,520 pairs of glasses; the central laboratory handled 122,711 examinations; the number of treated patients in the medical centres rose to 556,625; and 12,878 people attended the occupational training courses. Due to the work done and the quality of offered services, the Kolping Foundation Bolivia, which is active predominantly in the area of Santa Cruz, has a good reputation with the population and the authorities. The city's taxis carry a sticker, saying: "I drive you to the Kolping House". This is a sign that people come also from the city's surrounding areas to make use of what the Kolping Foundation has to offer.

## **Chile**

### **Social security and quality in one's working life**

Kolping was a considerable part of a seminar in Antofagasta with the title: "Social security, quality in one's working life: the challenge of social justice." The seminar was attended by more than 100 people from various areas of government and the civil society, in order to jointly think about as to how the situation of the working people can be improved in view of the changes in the work world which are brought about through globalization. What mattered on the one hand was to think about ways through which a minimum of social security can be achieved for everyone in the work world in the case of illness, accidents, and ageing, and then implement the findings, as well as to establish what the criteria are for jobs that uphold human dignity. The significance of the seminar for the whole region was underlined by the fact that the former Governor of the Antofagasta region, Mrs. Marcela Hernando, had opened the seminar. The results of the seminar have encouraged the participants to continue with joint initiatives for the humanization of the work world.

**Uruguay****Being missionaries with Kolping and in the Church**

From January 31 – February 3, 2009, Kolping Latin America is planning another Youth Day in the MERCOSUR region with the motto: "Being missionaries with Kolping and in the Church". This Youth Day is a follow-up of the 2006 Youth Day in Misiones, Argentina. The objective at that time was to give an alternate opportunity of getting together to those young people, who had not been able to take part in the World Youth Day in Cologne. There are also many youths who cannot travel to this year's World Youth Day, to be held from July 15 - 20 in Sidney, Australia, and KOLPING INTERNATIONAL will also not be present with an event of its own. Supported by KOLPING INTERNATIONAL, there will however be another Kolping Youth Day, which will take place in Montevideo, and 450 participants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay are expected to attend. Plans are now already under way in the involved neighbouring countries. The preparations focus first and foremost on the person of Adolph Kolping and testimony of his Christian life.

**Kenya/Cologne****General Praeses Msgr. Axel Werner calls for unity and reconciliation**

In a letter to Kolping Kenya, General Praeses Msgr. Axel Werner has expressed his dismay about the conflicts in Kenya and the savage clashes between ethnic groups. He assured the members of Kolping Kenya of the heartfelt concern of the International Kolping Society and calls upon all Kolping Families world-wide to pray for the people in Kenya. At the same time, he calls on all members of Kolping Kenya to set an example of the family-like closeness across all ethnic boundaries within their Kolping Families, and to set specific signs of solidarity with all people who are persecuted and driven from their homes. "It is a divine commandment," he writes, "to show hospitality to people without homes and possessions and to not leave them alone in their distress."

**Myanmar****The Kolping Society strengthens its presence**

Despite the difficult environment, there is a continuously positive development of the Kolping Society in Myanmar. In addition to the already existing two Kolping Families, another three were founded in February, and the Myanmar Bishops' Conference has also been informed about the objectives and working methods of the Kolping Society. The first two Kolping Families have developed a number of activities. Along with running sewing courses for women, a Kolping choir was founded, and the Kolping Families organized medical treatment through a German physician who, with a team of four doctors, has operated on 200 to 250 disfigured and crippled boys and girls. A new venture of the Kolping Families is training programs in the area of electronic data processing, and since their founding they have also been very active in their parishes.

**Eastern Timor****Diocesan Kolping Society of Baucau founded**

On January 30, 2008, the Diocesan Kolping Society of Baucau was founded in Lospalos, which joins together the three existing Kolping Families of the diocese in one organizational structure. This organizational union is to lay the foundation for a coordinated collaboration of the Kolping Society in this region of the country, which is constantly plagued by political unrest. Immediately after Eastern Timor became independent from Indonesia, occupational training centres were started in the Kolping Families of the diocese, i.e. two small carpentry workshops which are still turning out products, and fishermen were also assisted in getting new boats. The Kolping Families of the Diocese of Baucau are convinced that through their organizational union they have laid the foundation of a National Kolping Society of Eastern Timor.